



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

www.doc.wa.gov

Contact: Chad Lewis, Communications Department (360) 725-8817

August 20, 2010

California DOC Administrator Returns to Washington to Lead Prison System

OLYMPIA – A former Washington State Department of Corrections administrator will return from California to become the new prisons director effective Oct. 1.

Bernie Warner, currently the Chief Deputy Security of Juvenile Justice at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, will lead Washington's 13 prisons that house more than 16,000 offenders.

"Bernie has successfully led large, complex divisions across the country and in Washington," Secretary Eldon Vail said. "He will build on our tradition of operating safe, humane and progressive prisons."

During the 1990s Warner played a key role in the prison expansion in Washington. He also advised the Governor's Office on issues related to criminal justice and substance abuse. Since 2000 he has held high-ranking positions at state corrections agencies in Arizona, Florida and California.

Warner, 55, started his corrections career in 1980 as a counselor in the segregation unit at the Washington State Penitentiary.

"Having worked with the staff and communities to site a lot of the prisons in Washington 15 years ago, it will be exciting to have a leadership role in their operations," Warner said. "Washington State DOC has a great national reputation, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to come back to where I started."

Warner will inherit a prison division that is grappling with budget cuts and layoffs along with the rest of the agency. Since 2008 it has closed two prisons as well as units and towers across the state. It is expected to face additional budget cuts as a result of the state's declining tax revenue.

"It was absolutely critical for us to find someone like Bernie who is experienced in leading large agencies through adversity," Vail said.

Warner will succeed Dick Morgan, who retired as prisons director July 31 after 35 years with the agency. Deputy Prisons Director Dan Pacholke will continue to serve as the acting director until Warner arrives in October.